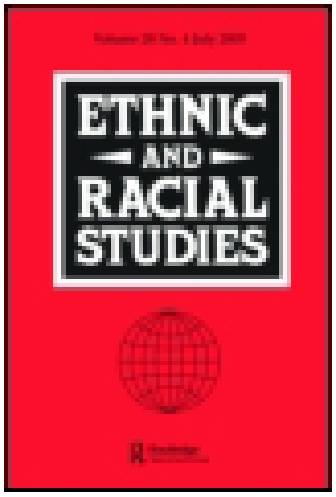

Ethnic and Racial Studies
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rers20

Ideology and nationalism: The Finnish move to independence, 1809-1918

Tracy X. Karner [a]
[a] Doctoral Student in the Department of Sociology , University of Kansas , Lawrence, KS, 66045 - 2172, USA
Published online: 13 Sep 2010.

Ideology and nationalism: the Finnish move to independence, 1809–1918

Tracy X. Karner

Abstract

Sociologists often dismiss the emergence of unique nationalist identities as reflections of changing structural elements, namely the political and economic. In this article I view nationalism as a socially created and sustained ideological discourse. From this orientation, the importance of attending to cultural or symbolic constructions within nationalist movements becomes more pronounced. Thompson's (1987) re-orientational conceptions of ideology are used as an interpretative frame to analyse the construction of nineteenth-century Finnish nationalism. Through this theoretical focus on language, the *Kalevala*, a book of Finnish folk poems, can be seen as a socio-historical phenomenon amidst human conflict. This collection of poems provided the necessary discourse used to disrupt the previous Swedish cultural and emergent Russian political dominance. Symbolizing the invented culture, the *Kalevala* served as the basis for popular Finnishness, as well as politically mobilizing critical ideological assertions. The creation, transmission, and contestation of social meaning, through the use of language and material culture, specifically embodied in the *Kalevala*, is traced throughout the Finnish struggle for independence.

It is said that the Finnish people 'actually sang themselves into existence' as a distinct national identity through the publication, in 1835, of a collection of folk poems known as the *Kalevala* (Friberg 1988, p. 12). Seen as the impetus for the revival of the Finnish language, the inspiration of their independence and the basis of their culture, this simple book came to embody Finnishness to the populace. Billson describes the *Kalevala* as the 'heart of a whole nation irresistibly blooming into song' (Billson 1900, p. 33).

One could therefore argue that, given its unique position within the Finnish move to nationalism, the *Kalevala* can serve as one easily identified measure of a shared and objectified ideology. Yet such symbolic roots of nationalism have not to date been fully explored by

Ethnic and Racial Studies Volume 14 Number 2 April 1991

sociologists. Little attention has been focused on nationalism's ideological formation and enduring appeal (K. Thompson 1986, p. 61). Although I do not deny the effects of political and economic factors in shaping nationalist movements, I shall focus in this article on the cultural component of the Finnish nationalist ideology.

Some have argued that nationalism can be seen as a socially created and sustained ideological discourse (McCrone 1984, p. 131). As such, a nationalist ideology becomes a 'flexible structure of beliefs about the nature of social relationships, one's position in the social structure and causes and consequences of social action' (Ferree and Miller 1985, p. 42). These are then maintained at the group level through 'shared symbol systems which tend to create their own paradigm of social reality' (Young 1976, p. 161). Consequently, these formations are not seen as the awakening of nations to consciousness but as the invention of nations that had not previously existed (Gellner 1983, p. 48).

The *Kalevala* contains heroic tales of mythic Finnish forefathers set in a 'golden age of Finnish culture attained by a free society in its natural environment of lakes and forests' (Smith 1986, p. 197). Accepted as authentic remnants of their heritage, the poems were utilized by Finns as a primary historical record of Finnish history, mythology and early understandings of the world around them (Kuusi *et al.* 1977, p. 31). The emergence of such 'invented traditions' as a component of a nationalist identity can be seen as the result of deliberate and innovative social engineering (Hobsbawm 1983, p. 13). By using the media of communication, linguistic or visual, 'symbolic links' to a heroic past or remnants of a lost folk-culture can be revived or re-invented (K. Thompson 1986, p. 59). Traditions are invented by inculcating certain behaviour with specified values for the participants, which through their repetition imply historic continuity (Hobsbawm 1983, p. 1). Such cultural formations can also veil the unifying ideology's origin (K. Thompson 1986, p. 107).

Ideologically charged discourse provides the moral frame for interaction among members of nationalist movements and for their actions counter to dominant power structures. Discourse can then be seen as the 'composer, organizer, and conveyor' of an ideology that is central to any formation and mobilization since it 'not only contains the practical rules for current collective action, but the moral precepts' of the movement (Steinberg 1989, p. 33). Individuals, then, by using a specific language, actively participate in the creation and recreation of their ideological outlook.

The central theme of the *Kalevala* had symbolic significance for a nation that had been occupied by foreign powers for several centuries. The *Kalevala* poems form an epic that centres on the symbolic struggle between good and evil, embodied by two peoples, the Kalevala and the Pohjola. The powers of goodness are tested throughout as the

Kalevala eventually rise to dominance over the oppressive Pohjola (Laitinen 1985, pp. 60–4). Used as metaphorical answers to Finland's political situation, these stories provided exemplars for daily living, inspiring Finns to struggle against the continuing Swedish culture and to fight the encroaching Russian political influence. Symbolically, this collection of poems contained manifestations of the 'naturalness' of a distinctive Finnish character and the 'properness' of Finnish autonomy.

The nationalist symbolism of the *Kalevala* was produced and reproduced within a context of shared knowledge and value systems. These ideologically bound productions, according to Mason (1985, p. 432), 'have their origins in developmental restructuring of . . . societies'. At the economic, political, and symbolic levels, a core of distinctive symbols may arise from, and in turn frame, the developments and patterning of ethnic-group formations leading to mobilization. Johnston (1985, p. 130) asserts that this symbolic identity formation is basic to all actions of mobilization. Yet while identities are developed and nurtured at the micro-level, they are often 'taken for granted' and not recognized by researchers. For example, some social scientists[1] view ethnic mobilization for nationalism as the consequence of changing structural factors, namely economic and political. While their theories of mobilization do recognize the need for groups to articulate their aims and their rationale for desiring changes, this development of a unique symbolic identity is merely an assumed and not thoroughly investigated precursor of collective action.

Scott (1988, p. 51) attends more directly to the symbolic components of movements, stating that the 'preconditions for justified imputation of beliefs are at the same time preconditions for group formation itself; the formation of a group and the formation of its ideology are one and the same'. Thus, any question of causality between the move to organize and the group-specific beliefs, becomes irrelevant (Scott 1988; Johnston 1985).

Gellner, however, presupposes that for 'every effective nationalism, there are "n" potential ones' that fail to 'activate their potential' (Gellner 1983, p. 45). The Finnish case provides an opportunity to analyse the use of articulated cultural distinctions by the three groups involved: the Russians, the Swedes, and the Finns. By situating the *Kalevala* within the socio-historical context, I argue that the collection was a vital element in the emergence of a Finnish identity. This, in turn, poses the question whether this book was necessary, though not sufficient, for the Finnish nationalist movement to become the 'one' from amongst Gellner's potential 'n'. Yet again, I am not making any claims of cultural causality but rather, following Smith (1976, p. 75), I should argue that 'culture provides an essential key to the understanding of the nationalist variety of secular ideology'.

In this article, I shall rely on Thompson's (1987) reorientational

conceptions of ideology to provide an interpretative frame for analysing the emergence of nineteenth-century Finnish nationalism. Focusing on language and material culture, specifically embodied in the *Kalevala*, the creation, transmission, and contestation of social meanings can be traced throughout the ensuing struggle for Finnish independence from Russia.

Conceptions of ideology

John Thompson (1987, p. 518) makes a distinction between two analytic conceptions of ideology: neutral and critical.[2] The neutral conception of ideology is a description of the beliefs or symbolic practices that underlie all social action. This refers to the assumptions of reality upon which rational actors base their decisions. Early Finnishness was a neutral ideology, describing the difference between Finns and either Swedes or Russians.

Thompson's second category of critical ideology[3] is concerned with the relationship of meaning to power and, specifically, its use to support and maintain asymmetrical distributions of power. Thompson states that 'to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination' (Thompson 1987, p. 519); the study of ideology becomes the study of the intersection of meaning and power. He identifies four modalities in the operation of a critical ideology: legitimation, dissimulation, fragmentation, and reification.

Legitimation A system presented as legitimate can retain its dominant position. Drawing from Max Weber's writings, Thompson defines legitimacy as the perception that a system is acting in the interests of those it controls: being just and worthy of support, being natural and proper. An ideology or belief that places such meaning on a system contributes to its dominance of power (Thompson 1987, p. 521).

Dissimulation Dissimulation refers to an ideology that conceals or obscures the relations of dominance. It may represent or interpret social life by selecting certain focal elements that effectively veil the underlying relation (Thompson 1987, p. 521). Thus, a deceptive 'schedule of preferences' is presented (Ferree and Miller 1985, p. 41).

Fragmentation Mobilizing meanings to fragment groups and individuals in opposition to each other can sustain relations of domination. Belief systems, which serve to 'divide and conquer' or place artificial hierarchical divisions between peoples, are ideologies of fragmentation (Thompson 1987, p. 521).

Reification Ideology can be also used to construct a natural, permanent and 'timeless' image of systems of domination (Thompson 1987, p. 521). Presenting the ruling group as a 'universal truth' or a 'chosen people' exemplifies the idea of reification. The relations of domination

are removed from their socio-historical context and recreated as an ahistorical given.

Thompson's (1987) critical concept of ideology offers a basic framework for analysing the emergence of Finnish nationalism. Ideologically-charged meaning may be used to sustain asymmetrical relations of power and dominance, whether through legitimation, dissimulation, fragmentation or reification. In the case of Finland, all four critical modalities are easily identified and provide an awareness of how the Finnish identity was neutrally created and then later mobilized.

Thompson (1987, p. 520) also focuses on language as it constitutes the 'fundamental medium' for mobilizing meaning in the social world. Ideology, then, should not be construed as discrete belief-systems or social cement, easily identified and analysed (K. Thompson 1986, pp. 34–5). As a dynamic process, it can be conceived as the reciprocal interplay of creation and recreation through the continual mediation of social usage (Scott 1988, p. 53). Since social actors choose to participate in specific discourses by using the specialized language, ideology should also be conceptualized in terms of an internal choice to participate rather than as a static external given.

The symbolic construction and use of a nationalist ideology can be analysed in the specific socio-historical context of Finland from 1809 to 1918. The emergence of 'Finnishness' is easily identified through the reclamation attempts of the folk language and culture. In its early stages, Finnishness is merely a neutral ideology: a description of a distinct group. Typified by the often repeated phrase: 'we are not Swedish, we can never become Russians; let us therefore be Finns' (quoted, in Friberg 1988, p. 15), a Finnish identity seems to arise almost through a process of elimination. This neutral identity of Finn is then transformed into a critical ideology of Fennomania, with a specific political agenda, as the Russian hegemony weakens. Consequently, the mobilization of Finnish nationalism occurs as the asymmetrical relations of political power become more and more apparent.

Finland

In the midst of the Napoleonic wars of 1808–9, Finland became a pawn between Sweden and Russia. Napoleon, seeking to weaken the tie between Sweden and his worst enemy, England, pressured Russia into launching an attack on Sweden through Finland. Though previously ruled by Sweden for over 600 years, Finland was left to provide her own defence against the invading Russians and surrendered without struggle. From 1809, with the signing of the Treaty of Hamin, Finland was annexed to Russia (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, pp. 178–93).

In 1809 the Russian Czar, Alexander I, wary of Napoleon, felt that

Finland's proximity to the Russian capital was ample reason to keep her loyal and pacified (Kallas and Nickels 1968, p. 26). Thus, Finland was set up as a separate autonomous grand duchy, unlike other subjects of Russian rule. This was the first time that the geographic area known as Finland had ever constituted its own administrative entity. It was to be governed internally by Finns through a senate, with the more important affairs being submitted directly to Alexander I, instead of through the Russian ministries. No Finnish conscripts were enrolled, taxes were frozen and the revenues were used in Finland. The Swedish constitution remained in use in Finland but was renounced in Sweden.

During this period of transition Sweden also began to develop a 'new national spirit', adopting a new form of government and plunging directly into the 'maelstrom of Romanticism' (Klinge 1980, p. 69). This cultural separation of the Swedes from the former Kingdom of Sweden's administrative entities, laws, and institutions that were retained in Finland served to widen the distance between the two countries. There was also a lingering anti-Swedish sentiment due to Sweden's unwillingness to protect Finland during the war with Russia. In general, however, the Finnish people were content with the annexation arrangement. Finnish élites were enticed by the number of governmental positions, previously held by Swedes, that were now available to them (Jutikkala 1969, p. 13).

Alexander I, of the Greek Orthodox faith, automatically became the head of the Finnish Lutheran Church. Responsible for the population registry and for collecting taxes, acting as public prosecutors and police chiefs, the Finnish clergy fulfilled several state duties. Government announcements were routinely made from the pulpit (Sariola 1988, p. 4).

Until 1809 Finnish élites had been completely assimilated into Swedish culture. The people of the central region of Turku spoke only Swedish and referred to themselves as Swedes (Wilson 1976, p. 5). Swedish was the country's 'official' language, dominating the administrative, educational and economic realms. Yet in reality, only 14.6 per cent of the population spoke Swedish, as Finnish was still the unofficial language of the rural areas (Wande 1984). This language division provided a receptive audience for the *Kalevala*. The collection's mythic tales of rural life appealed to the Finnish peasants, who saw their own existence reflected in its narrative (Friberg 1988, p. 16).

The creation of Finnishness

At the University of Turku, a movement towards the construction of a unique Finnish identity began. Attempts to 'reclaim' their lost, unique history were being made. Four young Finns studying under Henrik Gabriel Porthan became the first to begin seriously 'collecting

folklore in a patriotic attempt to ennoble their nation's past' (Wilson 1976, p. 27). Porthan had begun the scholarly research of oral folk traditions with his doctoral thesis in 1766–78 and was later given the distinction of being called the 'father of Finnish history' (Rantavaara 1972, p. 331). He postulated that, through collection and comparison, a scholar could reconstitute the original organic unity of a cultural system that had been fragmented with the disruptions of history (Friberg 1988, p. 15). Porthan's work served in part as the philosophical underpinning to the reclamation movements.

Four of Porthan's students (Elias Lonnrot, Johan Vilhelm Snellman, Johan Ludvig Runeberg and Zachris Topelius), known as the 'Turku Romantics', became active in the collection and presentation of Finnish oral traditions. Greatly influenced by Johann Gottfried von Herder's organic metaphor of culture, they identified four major dogmas that sustained the Finnish struggle for nationalist pursuits:

(1) People living in varying physical environments can develop differing national cultures. These differences are reflected in the national character or soul. No two nations can share exactly the same environment or historical development and therefore no two nations can have the same soul.
(2) For a nation to survive, it 'must be true to its national soul'. It must cultivate its own culture.
(3) The national soul can best be expressed in the form of its unique language and especially in its own folk poetry – the 'loftiest expression' to which language can aspire.
(4) If a nation's continuity of development has been interrupted through foreign intervention, its only salvation is through rediscovery and collection of its own folk poems from long ago. Only this can ensure that the nation's future can be true to its unique soul through a return to its past (Wilson 1976, pp. 28–30).

These four tenets, combined with Porthan's thesis of cultural reconstitution, became the philosophical rationale for folk-poem collecting and the movement to Finnish nationalism that ensued. The emergent Finnish sense of identity provided a basis from which to counter the beginning of the chauvinistic movement in Russia. In 1825 Nicholas I (1825–55) became the new tsar and demands for russification were made by Russian élites. Russification would entail a complete assimilation of Finland into Russian culture. Nicholas I, despite the demands, made no moves to enact any of these tenets in Finland. However, the fear that he might do so fuelled the move towards Finnish nationalism by giving it a sense of urgency.

Finnish nationalism, at this point, was merely a description of their difference from either Swedes or Russians. Using Thompson's (1987) distinctions, it was a neutral ideology. In this benign form, Finnishness

was facilitated to some extent by the state. Russia wanted Finland's ties to Sweden weakened and the Finnish culture and language appeared to address this. Thus, from the Russian view Finnishness could be seen as an ideology of internal fragmentation that distracted Finns from challenging Russian rule more directly.

The emergence of Finnish literature

In 1835, Elias Lonnrot published the *Kalevala*. One of the first books ever written in Finnish, it fuelled the national consciousness by reviving the 'officially' disregarded language. Lonnrot had collected and compiled the *Kalevala* from the Finnish rural folk, who were seen as the least defiled by the external foreign influence of first Sweden and then Russia. Thus, the *Kalevala* was thought to contain authentic representations of Finnish history: heroes, customs, and religion. Glorified as a reflection of the national soul that had been 'created by the Folk', the *Kalevala* was considered a complete epic of the early Finns rescued from oblivion by Lonnrot (Honko 1969, p. 48).

With the emergence of the *Kalevala*, the ideology of Finnishness gained new levels of complexity. Giving Finns a language fit for literature, a sense of national culture, and a historic link to the land, this book provided the seeds of an ideology of both reification and legitimacy. These elements of meaning originated with the publication of the *Kalevala*, though were not politically mobilized until later.

Admiration for the *Kalevala* spread throughout Europe, lectures on it were given in Germany, and the French version was the 'sensation of literary circles in Paris' (Jutikkala and Pirinen (1974, p. 205). The *Kalevala* was favourably compared with the great works of the Greeks and found to be of equal stature to European literature by J. L. Runeberg, the Turku Romantic (Wilson 1976, p. 41). Ironically, his pronouncements on the Finnish literary endeavour were published in Swedish (Honko 1969, p. 50). The Finnish language was gaining credibility, if not usage. Almost all the intellectuals[4] active in the Finnish-language movement were Swedish speakers (Miemois 1980, p. 95).

As the élite classes in Finland were Swedish-speakers, the publication of the *Kalevala* affected the social structure of the society in two specific ways: first, the rural peasants were esteemed as having the highest form of Finnish wisdom (Rantavaara 1969, p. 352); second, élites found it necessary to learn the Finnish language in order to share in this knowledge (Jutikkala 1969, p. 15). This engendered a blurring of the boundaries between classes and a readjustment of status claims. Such social divisions had previously been demarcated by the two languages. The *Kalevala* provided a bridge between the masses and the intellectual community (Kivisto 1984, p. 55). Thus,

people of different social classes began to interact for the common goal of Finnish culture.

Under Swedish and early Russian rule, Finnish writings had been subject to censorship and control in an effort to protect the 'simple folk' from the Western ideas of democracy. Only a few books on religion or economics had been translated into Finnish (Jutikkala 1969, p. 14). Lonnrot, committed to the cause of Finnish literature, founded the first Finnish-language periodical, *Mehilainen*, in 1835. Previously, he had translated books on agriculture, home medical care and, by 1844, had begun work on the first Finnish-Swedish dictionary (Magoun 1969, p. 28).

During the 1830s Runeberg began attempts to publish his book, *Tales of Ensign Stal*. Written in Swedish about the 1808–9 war, Runeberg turned the war into a metaphor for Finland's national struggle against Russia. In spite of the strict censorship, he was eventually able to publish it (in 1884) after changing only a few words. *Tales of Ensign Stal* has been used to inspire a sense of self-dedicated patriotism in generation after generation of Finns (Kallas and Nickels 1968, p. 221). Continuing his nationalist aims, his poem the 'Elk Hunters' (1832)[5] depicted Finns as 'harmonious, balanced people, cheerful and content even in their poverty'. This work provided the 'first and most profoundly effective Finnish patriotic portrait' (Klinge 1980, p. 70).

Publication of the *Kalevala* initiated an exploration of Finnish cultural history that provided the ideological components for later political mobilization. Popular support for Finnishness was reflected in the emergent literary and other art forms. These, in turn, served as symbolic exemplars of a nation yearning for self-expression and hence, independence.

Fennomania as critical ideology

As the Russian-Finnish hegemonic dialogue was forming, Russia continued to facilitate the Finnish-language movement as a fragmentation attempt in opposition to the continuance of Swedish culture. Finnish public support for Russia waned with rumours of russification and was sustained by new legislative privileges. Russia-Finland relations continued as a cyclic interaction of threat and compliance. By the mid-1800s, three main political ideologies had emerged: Liberalism, Svecomania, and Fennomania (Sariola 1988, p. 4).

Liberalism pushed for Finland to separate from Russia and join the union of Sweden-Norway to form a pan-Scandinavian bloc. Liberals recognized the Finnish- versus Swedish-language dispute only as a social tool with none of the romantic sentiments that the other two political groups espoused. Taking a moderate role, the Liberals stressed one nation with two languages.

As a political movement, the Liberals failed to gain popular support. Eventually, by the 1890s, most of their leaders had moved to the Svecmen party. Svecomania originated in opposition to the Finnish-language movement. Its proponents argued that the Swedish-speakers in Finland constituted their own nationality (Miemois 1980, p. 98) and, as such, Swedish racial heritage was seen as superior to the Finnish race. Svecomania strongly advocated the continued élite-status of Swedish culture and language in Finland, stressing the romantic ideals of political, if not cultural, independence for Finland.

The emergence of a critical Finnish ideology coincided with the formation of the Fennomen movement. Relying on the *Kalevala* for legitimacy, Fennomens stated their natural and prior historic claim to the land and used as their rationale for this the fact that most Finns spoke only Finnish. Fennomania advocated the recovery and recognition of a separate, unique Finnish cultural history and language. Growing from the earlier movement to collect folk poems, they organized to achieve official status for Finnish.

Several informal associations were organized for non-political and non-religious social gatherings, since public assemblies had previously been restricted by the tsars. Fennomen intellectuals set up societies that required members to use the Finnish language at every opportunity (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 206). Some groups gathered specifically to learn Finnish and study the *Kalevala* (Jutikkala 1969, p. 15). In some cases, the interaction between peasants and élites for the common pursuit of Finnish culture also served to strengthen democratic ideals of equality (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 206).

The institutionalization of Finnish culture

In 1855 Alexander II (1855–81), decidedly less repressive than his predecessor, began his reign as the Tsar of Russia. His leniency and the emergence of the *Kalevala* inspired literature, art, and music, fuelling the spirit of Finnish nationalism (Honko 1969, p. 51). Thus, several changes were effected during a brief period.

Finnish culture received wider acceptance. The education system, previously dominated by Swedish-speakers, was the first social institution to reflect the new spirit. In 1858 the first secondary school to conduct lessons only in Finnish opened. Lonnrot had also abridged the *Kalevala*, by 1862, for use in secondary education. The elementary primers were already full of *Kalevala* excerpts. These folk poems were presented factually to the Finnish youth as authentic remnants of Finnish history (Wilson 1976, p. 47).

In 1863 a former Turku Romantic, J. V. Snellman, a new senator and leader in the Finnish-language movement persuaded Alexander II to elevate the Finnish language to equal official status with Swedish.

Consequently, the government could now accept records and documents written in Finnish. The Swedish, Finnish, and Russian monetary systems also began the long separation process lasting from 1860 to 1878. This strengthened Finnish autonomy and helped to stabilize an economy that had been based on three separate currencies. The Finnish National Theatre was allowed to open in 1872 and produced politically germane plays by Finnish authors (Rantavaara 1972, p. 339).

Finnish cultural acceptance was only briefly undermined in the 1880s, as doubts about the *Kalevala*'s authenticity were voiced by anti-Finnish segments. The 'historic' Ossianic[6] poems, instrumental in mobilizing Scottish nationalism, had been proved fraudulent modern inventions, thus bringing about a new focus on the study of the *Kalevala*.

Lonnrot had combined several poems from different areas and reworked them extensively to smooth over dialectical variations (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 205). Julius Krohn, a scholar, speculated that the original poems came from foreign lands and arrived in Finland as 'poetic germ cells', where they then became imbued with the Finnish national spirit. The *Kalevala* was further justified with the tradition that great singers regularly changed the songs that they sang. Using a strategy of dissimulation, the Finnish-language movement was able to reclaim Lonnrot as merely the last of the great singers (Wilson 1976, pp. 53–6). However, research did show that the *Kalevala* was only Lonnrot's composition and not an authentic folk epic (Ahokas 1973, p. 8).

Russification and revolt

The programme of russification began during the 1890s when Tsar Nicholas II (1894–1917) came to power. Culminating in the signing of the February Manifesto of 1899 (Rantavaara 1972, p. 333), the new Tsar demanded blind obedience of his subjects and ruled as a general commands an army. Nicholas II considered Finland a 'frontier inhabited by an alien people' (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 196).

For Finland, russification meant that they lost their own army and were now subject to conscription in the Russian army; the Finnish government lost the power to make laws; all Finns were removed from office and the positions were filled with Russians; postal, custom and exchange systems were to be unified with Russia's; and Russian was now to become Finland's official language (Wilson 1976, p. 58). Former Finnish political leaders were exiled.

The Finns gathered over half a million signatures in protest against the February Manifesto, while in Europe, 1,063 noted scientists, writers and artists drew up a petition entitled 'Pro Finlandia' addressed to the Tsar (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 232). Fennomania had

mobilized enough support to remove any possibility of a popular Russian hegemony.

Finnish sentiments began being voiced in three broad political alliances – the Fennomens, the Finnish-speaking nationalists, and two new splinter-groups: the Conservatives and the Socialist Democratic Party. All three organizations called for independence from Russia (Jutikkala 1969, pp. 15–16; Sariola 1988, p. 5). In the midst of such turmoil, the *Kalevala* gave Finns hope, symbolizing a nation that had not, and therefore would not, perish (Wilson 1976, p. 59), as well as providing all the necessary components of the critical Finnish ideology.

By the late 1880s the Finnish clergy had become apologists for the Tsar's mandates.[7] They stood firmly against the Finnish nationalist movement as it derived its history and validation from the *Kalevala*. Considered pagan by the Lutheran Church, the *Kalevala* represented heroic male characters as god-like and provided a distinctly Finnish creation myth (Laitinen 1985, p. 60). Efforts by the Lutheran clergy to dispel interest in folk poetry were widespread (Kuusi *et al.* 1977, p. 34).

While Russia was at war with Japan from 1904 to 1905, Finns voiced a strong desire for internal parliamentary reforms. Put to a vote by the National Assembly, the reform was carried by universal suffrage (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 241). Continuing their pressure for full autonomy, Finland's parliament became the most democratic in Europe (even women were given the vote) and this also enabled the working class to become politically active. While under the Tsar's rule almost all the working population had been without the vote (Jutikkala 1969, pp. 18–19).

In 1904 Eugen Schauman, an exiled Finnish official, assassinated Governor General Bobrikov, the author of the new russification conscription laws. This was followed by several demonstrations against Russian domination that culminated in the organization of the general civil servants' strike in 1905 (Rantavaara 1972, p. 333). However, this Finnish strike was not orientated against management or bourgeois communities; rather it united the classes. Employers paid wages throughout the strike (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 240). Since their costly losses during the Crimean War, Finnish businessmen had long supported international recognition of Finland as being 'not a real part of the belligerent Russian empire' (Blomstedt 1980, p. 63).

This display of Finnish solidarity motivated the Tsar to repeal the February 'Manifesto of Russification' that prompted Finland to remain loyal to Russia during World War I. Finns hoped that at the end of the war, they would be able to return to their former state of autonomous rule. Such an idea was discarded, since the 'Imperial Plan for Russification' was announced in 1914 (Kallas and Nickels 1968, p. 41).

In turn, Germany offered to support the committed Fennomen separatist movement.

Russia had proved to be a stable, reciprocal trade partner for Finland over the years. Until 1916 Finnish industry had been kept busy supplying Russia with manufactured goods. Defence work alone had provided jobs for the thousands of rural Finns moving to the western cities (Kallas and Nickels 1968, p. 42). Finland was immediately thrown into hardship as Russian defence projects ended and Finns were put out of work. Finnish industry as a whole suffered a general decline. Food imports from Russia were also stopped, creating shortages and higher prices and causing famine in the cities (Kallas and Nickels 1968, p. 43).

The elections of 1916 were held, even though the Tsar had promised not to convene parliament until after the war. Voter turnout was low, resulting in an absolute majority for the Socialists (Jutikkala and Pirinen 1974, p. 250). In October 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia overthrew the Tsar and the provisional government, under Lenin, restored Finnish autonomy (Jutikkala 1969, p. 20).

Thus, during this era the results of earlier Fennomen attempts to increase the status of the Finnish-speaking classes came to fruition. By opening higher education to Finnish-language speakers and instituting universal sufferage, they were able to mobilize those who had previously been denied political participation. Now constituting a political majority, these Finns were already collectively united and ready to revolt, when faced with russification.

Finnish independence

The Russian provisional government had retained the rights to determine foreign policy and military decisions over Finland. However, on 6 December 1917 the Finnish parliament declared Finland completely independent (Jutikkala 1969, p. 21). Russia, then newly under Lenin's leadership, recognized Finnish independence on 4 January 1918 (Kallas and Nickels 1968, p. 45).

Finland immediately became embroiled in a civil war that, except for the outcome, mirrored the Russian Revolution. The socialist 'Reds', backed by Lenin, fought the bourgeois 'Whites' who were supported by Germany, for control of Finland. Simultaneously, Finns waged a two-year war to remove all Russian troops from their land, as well as to resist the new Soviet government at their eastern border (Jutikkala 1969, p. 21).

Nationalism and ideology in Finland

The Finnish case is interesting because it provides intriguing elements for an assessment of nationalist movements. Blomstedt (1980, p. 65) argued that there were 'not even the slightest traces' of Russian economic exploitation of Finland during the years of annexation. Given the administrative freedom of the virtual self-rule that Finland enjoyed until russification, early political motivation for the nationalist endeavour was lacking. We are left, then, with a nation in search of an identity. Amidst the claims of economic or political causality typical of mobilization theories, the Finnish example supports a reappraisal of the motivational role of culture in group formation. The dominant position of culture, exemplified by the *Kalevala*, can be identified as a central element in the creation of Finnishness.

In this article, I have attempted to trace the creation, transmission, and contestation of social meanings by applying Thompson's reorientational theory of ideology to the use of the *Kalevala* within the Finnish struggle for independence. Through this theoretical focus on language, the *Kalevala*, can be seen as a socio-historical phenomenon amidst human conflict. As a discourse of Finnishness, the book was useful in disrupting Swedish cultural and Russian political dominance.

The invention of Finnishness can easily be traced from the Turku Romantics, as they purposefully constructed a unique cultural history and a literature for the Finns. This academic pursuit spread to the populace with the publication of the *Kalevala*. The ensuing desire to consume Finnish 'history' crossed class lines, inspired new forms of art, music, and drama based on the mythology, and motivated the formation of small *Kalevala* study-groups. Beginning as a neutral, descriptive ideology, Finnishness contained the elements necessary for constructing a successful critical ideology.

Developing a critical ideology with a specific political agenda of Finnish autonomy, the Fennomens relied heavily on the emerging desires for a national identity. The movement utilized the historic claim to the geographic region of the *Kalevala* with the philosophical tenets of Herder and Porthan to legitimize and reify the naturalness and properness of Finnish cultural recognition and acceptance in Finland. The legislative changes – use of the Finnish language in schools and government offices – were justified as the natural right of Finns. Thus, we can readily identify the use of legitimation and reification ideologies within the Fennomen movement.

Dissimulation ideology was also used to sustain the *Kalevala*'s importance when its authenticity was challenged. By portraying Lonnrot as the last rune-singer, his literary endeavours were made to fit into the 'historic' culture, instead of supporting claims of its modern composition. Thus, the Fennomens skilfully turned an invented culture

embodied by a book of folk poems into a mobilizing critical ideology. Legitimation, reification and dissimulation claims were founded on the *Kalevala* assertions. Also, as the Russian-Finnish hegemonic dialogue was still in an emergent formation process, Russia supported the Finnish-language movement. Seen as a way of weakening the former ties with Sweden, Finnishness was used as a fragmentation ideology. Utilizing Thompson's frame to compare the other political movements, Svecomens and Liberals, we find that neither had the components of a critical ideology. Svecomens relied on assertions of racial superiority and the culture of occupation for legitimation. They advocated the continuance of an administrative structure and culture that was fast becoming obsolete in its home country of Sweden and this weakened their case. The Liberals had no nationalist ideology and did not take sides in the language dispute. They provided no answers to the search for a national culture and history.

Other factors also contributed to the Fennomen success. The majority of the population who spoke only Finnish was a ready audience for the *Kalevala* history. The rural peasants and working classes were incorporated more fully into national participation through the opening of Finnish-language schools and into the political sphere with the suffrage reforms. After having been isolated from the decision-making process, whether through lack of education or vote, this majority was ripe for a mobilization ideology with which it could identify. The *Kalevala* provided this and the Fennomens used it to their advantage.

Conclusions

The analysis of ideology through representative cultural objects in their socio-historical context can facilitate an understanding of collective symbolic-identity formation. Such an awareness, applied to the specific relations of power, provides insight into the process by which nationalism is created and recreated.

Through the overview presented of the Finnish case, it becomes apparent that Thompson's (1987) reorientational theory of ideology provides a useful heuristic for the study of nationalism. The distinction between the neutral descriptive ideology of Finnishness and the critical mobilizing ideology of Fennomania is helpful in tracing the utility of the *Kalevala* within the independence movement. Symbolizing the invented culture, the *Kalevala* provided the origin of popular Finnishness as well as the basis for the critical ideological assertions. Thus, from Thompson's framework, the importance of culture in the creation, transmission, and contestation of meaning in the social realm becomes more pronounced.

From the Finnish example it can also be suggested that the group

best able to formulate a critical ideology will be the one most likely to foster public support and a successful hegemony. By using such an analytic orientation, mobilization and the emergence of a critical ideology can be seen to occur together. That is, the movement best able to obscure its desire to dominate and/or maintain its position of power is more likely to succeed in gaining or maintaining control. In Finland these goals were obscured by the initial acceptance and continued promotion of Finnishness in the cultural realm. Thus, the Finnish case succinctly illustrates the need fully to explore the symbolic constructions in the origin and maintenance of nationalist organizations and mobilization.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Joane Nagel, William G. Staples, Lewis Mennerick, Carol Warren, Jan Flora, and Peter Kivisto for their thorough reading and perceptive comments on earlier drafts of this article.

Notes

1. According to Nagel (1980), the first step in ethnic-group formation is the perceived commonalities of one group in opposition to a more dominant group. Even those who view ethnicity from a purely economic base discuss the need for the communication of similar interests, for example, Hechter's (1987) deductive theory of group solidarity; relative power-deprivation (Mason 1985); position relative to modernization forces and benefits (Horowitz 1985); increased economic or political competition (Nagel and Olzak 1982); and situational ascriptiveness (Padilla 1982).
2. Thompson's expressed intention is to utilize his conceptual distinctions to develop a 'depth-hermeneutical approach' as a systematic methodology for the interpretation of ideologies through the specific analysis of discourses. I have found the broad frame of his work useful in teasing out the utility of differing ideologies available in the social sphere. Thus, it is important to note that, although I am relying on Thompson's framework, I have orientated it to a broader scope than he may have intended.
3. The term 'ideology' has often been used negatively to refer to social actors entrenched in the thoughts or meaning of the 'other' – the beliefs of someone other than the individual actor. This relates to Thompson's critical ideology, as it denotes a purposive intent to deceive.
4. This is due mainly to the fact that all the educational institutions used the official language of Swedish.
5. Runeberg's poem has been translated both as the 'Elk Hunters' and as the 'Moose Hunters' (Ahokas 1973, p. 41).
6. James MacPherson and the Rev. John MacPherson, two Scotsmen, by 'two distinct acts of bold forgery', created an indigenous literature for Celtic Scotland and a new history to support it. Using Irish ballads found in Scotland, James wrote an epic transferring the storylines from Ireland to Scotland. The MacPhersons then dismissed the originals as 'debased modern compositions' and explained the similarity away by saying that native Irish literature was stolen from the innocent Scots during the Dark Ages. James supported these claims by writing *Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (Trevor-Roper 1983, pp. 16–18).
7. As early as 1830 the Finnish middle class had expressed their discontent with

Russia through the Lutheran Church. Their main grievance centred on the alliance of church and state. The call for separation of the two bodies was paralleled by an increasing emergence of local lay-movements. These pietist revivalists focused on personal salvation. Strongest in rural areas where Finnish culture was most prevalent, an intense 'opposition to the official rigidity of the State Church' developed. Yet these groups seldom entered the political arena (Sariola 1988, p. 4).

References

AHOKAS, JAAKKO 1973 *A History of Finnish Literature*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press

BILLSON, CHARLES J. 1900 *Popular Poetry of the Finns*, London: David Nutt

BLOMSTEDT, YRJO 1980 'Nationalism in Finland – and the effects of economic factors upon it', in Rosalind Mitchison (ed.) *The Roots of Nationalism: Studies in Northern Europe*, Edinburgh: John Donald, pp. 61–5

FERREE, MYRA M. and MILLER, FREDERICK D. 1985 'Mobilization and meaning: toward an integration of social movements', *Sociological Inquiry*, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 38–51

FRIBERG, EINO (translator) 1988 *The Kalevala*, Helsinki: Otava

GELLNER, ERNEST 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell

HECHTER, MICHAEL 1987 'Nationalism as group solidarity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 415–26

HOBSBAWM, ERIC 1983 'Introduction: inventing traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–14

HONKO, LAURI 1969 'The Kalevala and Finnish culture', in Ralph J. Jalkanen (ed.) *The Finns in North America*, Hancock, MI: Michigan State University Press, pp. 46–52

HOROWITZ, DONALD L. 1985 *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

JOHNSTON, JR., HENRY E. 1985 'Catalan ethnic mobilization: some "primordial" revisions of the ethnic competition model', in Scott G. McNall (ed.) *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, vol. 6, pp. 129–47

JUTIKKALA, EINO 1969 'Toward independence: a survey of the history of Finland to 1920', in Ralph J. Jalkanen (ed.) *The Finns in North America*, Hancock, MI: Michigan State University Press, pp. 9–23

JUTIKKALA, EINO and PIRINEN, KAUKO 1974 *A History of Finland*, New York: Praeger

KALLAS, HILLAR and NICKELS, SYLVIE 1968 *Finland: Creation and Construction*, New York: Praeger

KIVISTO, PETER 1984 *Immigrant Socialists in the United States*, Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press

KLINGE, MATTI 1980 ' "Let us be Finns" – the birth of Finland's national culture' in Rosalind Mitchison (ed.) *The Roots of Nationalism: Studies in Northern Europe*, Edinburgh: John Donald, pp. 67–75

KUUSI, MATTI, BOSLEY, KEITH and BRANCH, MICHAEL 1977 *Finnish Folk Poetry-Epic*, Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society

LAITINEN, KAI 1985 *Literature of Finland*, Helsinki: Otava

MAGOUN, JR., FRANCIS P. 1969 'Materials for the study of the Kalevala', in Ralph J. Jalkanen (ed.) *The Finns in North America*, Hancock, MI: Michigan State University Press, pp. 24–45

MASON, DAVID 1985 'Nationalism and the process of group mobilisation: the case of "loyalism" in Northern Ireland reconsidered', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 408–25

MCCRONE, DAVID 1984 'Explaining nationalism: the Scottish experience', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 129–37
MIEMOIS, KARL J. 1980 'Swedish nationalism in Finland', in Jacques Dofny and Akinsola Akiwowo (eds) *National and Ethnic Movements*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, pp. 91–105
NAGEL, JOANE 1980 'The conditions of ethnic separatism: The Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq', *Ethnicity*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 279–97
NAGEL, JOANE and OLZAK, SUSAN 1982 'Ethnic mobilization in new and old states: an extension of the competition model', *Social Problems*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 127–43
PADILLA, FELIX 1986 'Latino ethnicity in the city of Chicago', in Joane Nagel and Susan Olzak (eds) *Competitive Ethnic Relations*, San Diego, CA: Academic Press, pp. 153–71
RANTAVAARA, IRMA 1972 'A nation in search of identity', in David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (eds) *The Modern World II*, London: Aldus Books, pp. 329–61
SARIOLA, SAKARI 1988 'Church and socialism in Finland', an unpublished paper
SCOTT, ALAN 1988 'Imputing beliefs: a controversy in the sociology of knowledge', *Sociological Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 31–56
SMITH, ANTHONY D. 1986 *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell
—— 1976 'Neo-classicist and romantic elements in the emergence of nationalist conceptions', in Anthony D. Smith (ed.), *Nationalist Movements*, London: Macmillan, pp. 74–87
STEINBERG, MARC W. 1989 'Talkin' class: discourse, ideology and their intersection', paper presented to 'Bringing Class Back In: A Working Conference', at the University of Kansas in April 1989
THOMPSON, JOHN B. 1987 'Language and ideology: a framework for analysis', *Sociological Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 516–36
THOMPSON, KENNETH 1986 *Beliefs and Ideology*, New York: Ellis Horwood Limited
TREVOR-ROPER, HUGH 1983 'The invention of tradition: The Highland tradition of Scotland', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15–42
WANDE, ERLING 1984 'Two Finnish minorities in Sweden', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, vol. 5, nos. 3–4, pp. 225–41
WILSON, WILLIAM A. 1976 *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press
YOUNG, CRAWFORD 1976 *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press

TRACY X. KARNER is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Sociology of the University of Kansas.
ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045 – 2172, USA.